

# Whole School Plan for Assessment

**Date Last Reviewed:** June 2013

**Implementation Date :** These reviewed procedures will apply from June 2013.

**Timetable for Review:** May 2015

## **Ratification and Communication**

This policy was originally ratified by the B.O.M. in June 2013 and it has been made available to the school community via the school website.

The review was communicated to the B.O.M. in June 2013

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: June 2013

**Mary McCormack**  
**Chairperson BOM**

# Content

## **Introductory Statement and Rationale**

This policy was originally formulated at whole school planning day using the expertise of a S.D.P.S. facilitator. The policy was re-drafted in Tubber N.S. and was ratified by B.O.M. It was reviewed in February 2012 following the issuing of circular 56/2011 and again in June 2013.

In Tubber National School we seek to recognise the importance of a uniform approach to assessment and record keeping throughout the school so as to enhance teaching and learning.

Gathering evidence about how well students are learning, and using this information to improve the learning opportunities provided for them are essential elements in ensuring that each student makes good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills. This process of gathering and using assessment data should begin at the level of the individual student to enable the teacher to adjust instruction to suit the needs of individual learners and to inform them and their parents about the progress that they are making.

Gathering and using assessment data also needs to take place at the level of the school, where the principal, teachers and B.O.M. can use this information to identify how well they are providing for the literacy and numeracy needs of individual students and groups of students in the school and how best they can improve the learning in the school.

Assessment data is also needed to inform national educational policy for literacy and numeracy and identify ways of improving the performance of the school system. The literacy and numeracy strategy is designed to improve significantly the collection and analysis of information about students' learning in literacy and numeracy.

## **Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School**

Tubber National School seeks to enable each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment where the talents of each child are valued. This work can best be done where there is a high level of openness and co-operation between staff, parents and pupils. We believe that our assessment and record keeping policy will enhance our work.

## **Aims**

- To benefit pupil learning
- To monitor learning processes
- To generate baseline data that can be used to monitor achievements over time
- To involve parents and pupils in identifying and managing learning strengths and needs
- To assist teacher's long and short term planning
- To coordinate assessment procedures on a whole school basis

## **Purposes of Assessment**

- To identify the particular learning needs of pupils/groups of pupils including the more able
- To monitor pupil progress and attainment
- To enable teachers to modify their programmes in order to ensure that the particular learning needs of individual pupils/groups are being addressed
- To compile records of individuals pupils' progress and attainment
- To facilitate communication between parents, teacher, and other professionals about pupils' development, progress and learning needs
- To enable teachers to monitor their own approaches and methodologies taking into accounts pupils' different learning styles

## **Assessment for Learning**

### **Informal Assessment Methods :**

#### *1. Teacher Observation*

This involves assessing the child's progress by observing, questioning, and monitoring the child's progress in all areas of the curriculum. This may include children's responses, participation, interaction and reaction in class.

If an ongoing significant difficulty is observed it will be recorded on the P/T Record Template and will be used to inform parents at P.T.M.

## *2. Teacher/Designed Tasks and Tests:*

Teachers use a range of activities to assess the progress of individuals or groups across the full range of curriculum subjects. These may be oral, pictorial, written or practical (possibly electronic) and may be embedded in the everyday teaching and learning activities in the class or may be used by the teacher in key areas at the end of the topics/activities to provide a fuller picture of the child's performance and progress for example , spelling tests, table tests, S.E.S.E. tests, dictation. (Newell Literacy Programme) etc.

## *3. Concept Mapping*

These are used to gather information as a visual representation about the children's ideas and understanding in subject areas for example Science, English, S.E.S.E. As an assessment tool it provides evidence of changes in children's thinking over time e.g. a before and after assessment of a topic.

## *4. Self-Assessment*

Children are encouraged to look at their own work in a reflective way and to set personal learning targets for themselves.

Our multi-class situation embraces conferencing as an integral teaching methodology working with individuals or small groups.

It develops self-reflection skills in a safe environment and fosters collegiality by learning and sharing with peers and adults.

Error Analysis will be used as a strategy in self-assessment by the individual child in particular reading and written work.

Questioning as a classroom methodology is a useful assessment tool.

Other areas which promote self-assessment are homework, Parental/pupil feedback, Teachers end of year of report.

## *5. Work samples, Portfolios, and Projects*

Some examples of children's work are retained where possible to monitor the child's progress in knowledge and skills e.g. Art Portfolio, Write-a-Book project, website, poetry books, Discover Primary Science Project, Green School's Project, digital images of models and artwork.

Each child will also have their own 'Assessment Folder' into which they can choose to put what they deem to be their best work. This is a similar concept to the SALF folder concept. Students will be encouraged to self-assess their own work in each curricular area. One subject a week will be chosen and the child will be allowed to choose their best work from that

subject over the course of a certain period (e.g. in the past month) to put into their folder (photocopies from copies etc. will be used).

### *6. Criterion-Referenced Tests*

Mostly used in Maths to measure specific areas of learning and readiness to move on to a different topic e.g. Maths Challenge.

## **Standardised Tests**

### Gaeilge

2nd - 6<sup>th</sup> Drumcondra Irish Test

Certain pupils may be excluded from the Drumcondra Irish test at the principal's discretion. (For example: children for whom English is not their first language)

### Literacy

Senior Infants - Micra T 1 (based on ability)

1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>- Micra T

1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>-Drumcondra Spelling Test

*"English-medium schools are required to implement standardised testing in English reading and Mathematics during the period May/June for all students in 2nd, 4th and 6th classes with effect from 2012 onwards."*  
*Circular 56/2011*

### Numeracy

1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>-Sigma-T

Pupils may be excluded from the test if in the view of the school principal (refer to Circular56/2011)

Students may be excluded from standardised testing if in the view of the school principal they have a learning or physical disability which would prevent them from attempting the tests or, in the case of migrant students, where the level of English required in the test would make attempting the test inappropriate.

These tests will be administered before the end of May to ensure that the results will be available for school reports before the end of June and will be of benefit in planning for the effective use of resources available and will inform individual teacher planning.

These tests will be administered, corrected, interpreted, recorded and reported by the class teacher in accordance with guidelines in Circular 56/2011.

Sigma-T website (record grids) will be used to identify areas in maths where the children are experiencing difficulty.

To do this:

Go to <http://micra-t.com>. Click on the link to Sigma -t tab. Choose level. Insert a "1" for each correct answer. There is no need to enter anything in a cell where a pupil's answer is incorrect. The total number of correct answers obtained by each child as well as the percentage of correct answers in each strand area is automatically calculated. The number of pupils correctly answering each item is also calculated automatically.

Standard score range	Sten score range	Descriptor	Coverage
115 and above	8-10	Well above average	Top one sixth of pupils
108-114	7	High Average	One-sixth of pupils
93-107	5-6	Average	Middle one third of pupils
85-92	4	Low average	One sixth of pupils
84 and below	1-3	Well below average	Bottom one sixth of pupils

### *a) Screening*

The screening tests used to identify learning strengths/weaknesses are

- Middle Infant Screening Test - 2<sup>nd</sup> term Senior Infants
- Sigma T
- Drumcondra English - Administered to new entrants at older class levels who were not enrolled at determined standardized testing time.

These screening tests will be administered by learning support teacher in conjunction with class teacher

Mist programme -Forward Together worked on if deemed necessary.

Early intervention is of great importance in Tubber N.S. Screening may lead to specific intervention by class teacher.

If the class teacher has concerns regarding a child the class teacher will refer child to L/S teacher in consultation with parents/guardians for diagnostic testing.

Screening is used by Tubber N.S. to initiate the approach to intervention as per circular 02/05

Results communicated at P.T.M. or at specific meeting if required.

### *b) Diagnostic Assessment*

The Diagnostic tests used in the school are

- M.I.S.T.
- Sigma T
- Micra T

L/S teacher in consultation with class teacher interprets the results of diagnostic assessment sheet.

The administration of such tests is in keeping with the approach recommended by Circular 02/05 where a staged approach is used by the individual class teachers before recourse to diagnostic testing/psychological assessment. Parents are provided with test results and if a psychological assessment is warranted, parental permission is sought and a consent form is completed. The Principal will facilitate such an assessment happening.

From these results an education plan will be devised.

In consultation with parents the results of the diagnostic assessment may be made available educational psychologist/other education professionals if further assessment is required.

### *c) Psychological Assessment*

In Tubber N.S. the criteria used in selection of pupils for learning support is by greatest need.

The class teacher in consultation with the Principal will consult a psychologist about diagnostic results.

Class teacher/principal will contact the parents for permission to secure a psychological assessment for their child.

Class teacher/principal will arrange consultation with specialised professionals to organise an assessment.

The assessment would be a central part an educational plan for the child and would incorporate recommendations made by the specialised professionals.

The reports are stored in the individual pupil's files in a filing cabinet in Principal's classroom.

#### *d) Recording the Results*

In Tubber N.S. we understand the terminology associated with assessment results.

NCCA reporting card template is used as an end of year report and is sent to the parents in June. Results of standardised testing are recorded on these cards. These report cards are stored in each child's individual file. If deemed necessary by the class teacher/principal records of the Parent/Teacher meetings are retained in the child's file.

Sensitive data is stored in files and access is restricted.

In case of informal testing, teacher may direct a pupil to be an agent of their own learning when reviewing work and teacher designed tasks and tests.

In a small two teacher school we have adequate opportunity to communicate appropriate information based on assessment.

There is a pupil tracking system in operation for each student which records all standardised tests.

## **Reporting the Results**

Class tracking system of each individual child was implemented in Sept 08. The purpose of this system is to track each child throughout primary school from 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> and to implement a system of early identification of children who deviate by a standard score of 15/more from one year to the next.

Reporting results to parents will be in accordance with Circular 56/2011. Sten scores will be reported and we have agreed standard language descriptors to be utilised throughout the school (See table below)

Relevant psychological assessments will be transferred on to secondary school on receipt of parental consent.

The scores will also be reported to the BOM on an annual basis as per circulars 0056/2011 and 0018/2012.



## Success Criteria

Practical indicators of the success of the policy will include

- *A range of informal and formal assessment modes are used to place assessment as an integral part of teaching and learning*
- *Procedures run smoothly and efficiently because there is clarity about what is expected and who is responsible for different aspects*
- *Transfer of information from class teacher to class teacher happens efficiently at the beginning/end of school year.*
- *Parental/Teacher Feedback*

## Roles and Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the class teacher to set in motion staged intervention/informal assessment at class level. At Stage 2, the responsibilities are shared with the Learning Support teacher. The Principal assumes a primary role at Stage 3 when a Psychological Assessment may be required. Parents have a role at all stages and the lines of communication must be always kept open.